

DEVELOPMENT & CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2022 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Reay (Chairman)

Cllr. Thornton (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Clayton, Penny Cole, Pett, Roy, and Williams

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Barnett, Fothergill and McGregor

Cllr. Perry Cole was also present.

Cllrs. Paul Darrington, Dickins, and Hunter were also present via a virtual media platform that did not constitute attendance as recognised by the Local Government Act 1972.

20. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Development & Conservation Advisory Committee held on 11 October 2022, be approved and signed as a correct record.

21. Declarations of interest

There were none.

22. Actions from previous meeting

There were none.

23. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder presented an update on the services within her portfolio. The Planning Enforcement Manager role had been filled through an internal promotion, and the Council would recruit for her previous role to maintain capacity within the team. A new Principal Infrastructure Delivery Officer had also been appointed internally.

Development Management had determined 95% of major applications, 87% of minor applications, and 93% of all other applications within time. 74% of all appeals had been dismissed. This meant all of the Council's targets for the service were exceeded. The team were within the top 15% nationally regarding the volume of work processed.

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Building Control maintained over 70% of the market share. Further member training would be arranged for the upcoming year.

24. Referral from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

25. Budget 2023/24: Review of Service Dashboards and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs)

The Head of Finance presented the report which set out updates to the 2023/24 budget process within the existing financial strategy. SDC is not immune from the financial challenges affecting the country therefore this budget process is expected to be particularly challenging.

No changes had been made to future assumptions at the stage which would be reviewed during the budget process, as usual. However, due to the April 2022 pay award being higher than previously assumed and an annual savings target of £100,000 already included, an annual budget gap of £735,000 was currently reported.

The report presented a growth proposal that had been identified which needed to be considered. It requested further suggestions from Members before finalising the budget for 2023/24. Informed by the latest information from Government and discussions with Cabinet, it is proposed that the Council once again sets a balanced 10-year budget and continues to aim to be financially self-sufficient.

The Committee considered the growth proposal identified in Appendices E & F to the report. Further consideration was given to the Council's pre-application service, and possible avenues to improve or broaden the services offered without additional cost.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved:

- (a) That it be recommended to Cabinet that the growth proposal (SCIA 19) identified in Appendices E & F to the report applicable to this Advisory Committee, be considered.
- (b) That no further income or growth proposals were identified.

26. Infrastructure Funding Statement

The Strategic Planning Manager and the Infrastructure Delivery Officer presented the report, which outlined the proposed priorities for the Council's new Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) which the Council was required to report to the Government by the end of the year.

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The Infrastructure Delivery Officer outlined the current priorities for allocating CIL and Section 106 (s106) monies, including projects being identified within the Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP), and that the projects are related to new development. She explained that from 2014 to date, 64% of CIL Funding was allocated to Community Facilities, and 92% of Section 106 funding was allocated to Affordable Housing.

She explained that the proposed priorities within the IFS were controlled by the existing evidence base and the IDP. Infrastructure projects to support major development sites were also a consideration for the IFS priorities. The priorities were largely unchanged from last year, including Health and Social Care, and Highways and Transport, but Education was newly identified as a key infrastructure type for the upcoming year.

In response to questions, they explained to the Committee that the IDP was a live document that would develop throughout the plan, with details added as sites were identified and site-specific information became available. They further explained that the IFS priorities were for direct developer contributions, and would be relevant even if national level changes changed the CIL system. They outlined the process through which the list of projects was constructed, through identified needs to support development, and through working with Infrastructure Providers on their priorities for their capital programmes.

Resolved: That it be recommended that to Cabinet that:

- a) The criteria for prioritising infrastructure projects as set out in paragraph 6 should remain; and
- b) That the specific projects and types of Infrastructure recommended in paragraphs 25-34 of this report are identified in the IFS as having a priority for full or partial funding.

27. Local Plan Update

The Strategic Planning Manager and the Planning Policy Team Leader presented the report, which provided an update on the consultation exercises for the Local Plan to date. The public response had been focused on the town centres vision and housing density. Feedback from the first public drop-in session had primarily focused on local sites, and were from the senior demographic.

They had also received feedback from the Town and Parish Council Forum and the Local Strategic Partnership. There had been Duty to Cooperate meetings with other authorities and infrastructure providers, and the Portfolio Holder had consulted with her counterparts in neighbouring authorities.

The Sevenoaks Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan was at examination, and would likely need modifications following this before going to referendum. The Swanley Neighbourhood Plan would likely go to its Regulation 14 Consultation in January 2023.

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They outlined the Evidence Base for the Plan, which was mostly completed, with the Infrastructure Development Plan and the Strategic Transport Study still ongoing.

In response to questions, they explained that the best and most efficient use of land for settlements was not limited to densification, but also included intensification and the strategic use of small sites. They further explained that many of the residents identified in the Older Person's Housing study wanted to "rightsize", but there was a lack of smaller housing available for them to move into. The Committee discussed some of the recent development schemes in Sevenoaks and how they integrated into the culture of the town.

Resolved: That the contents of the report be noted.

28. Work plan

The Work Plan was noted, with the following additions:

2 March 2023

- Local Plan Update
- Neighbourhood Plan Update

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8:24PM

CHAIRMAN